

Rev 26-04-15a

Greetings, welcome to Grace and Truth Bible Church on the 15th of April, 2026. We're in the book of Revelation. We are in chapter 16, moving to chapter 17.

We're at the final bowl of the seven judgment bowls. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study, we'll begin. Father, how grateful we are for this time of opportunity for the Holy Spirit to minister your word to our souls and to activate the function of our spiritual gifts as we spend a brief time of fellowship and mutual encouragement.

We're grateful for the Lord Jesus and for the standing we have before you because of him. We thank you for this revelation of his purpose, his glory, his return, and we pray that as we look at this portion of your word together, that the Holy Spirit will bless it to each of our hearts. May we find in it fruitful sources of reflection and application.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen. So we find ourselves here in the closing portion of Revelation chapter 16. We have seen the previous bowls.

What I would like to draw to our attention is the reason for which the Lord Jesus gives us these judgments. They are certainly predictive as the narrative record of past judgments is instructive for us, so these. We can look at Israel in the wilderness.

We can see that lack of diligence, lack of obedience is a problem. Turn with me back to, and this is going to shed light on our passage. The reason we're going back here.

Turn back a little bit to Hebrews chapter three. Hebrews chapter three. We have already seen several parallels between the judgments that we find here in the seals, trumpets, and bowls, which we could see what's in the trumpets, or the thunders, rather.

But in Hebrews chapter three, we have a passage that provides us background on how we can benefit from what we're seeing in the book of Revelation. What is it for? When we finish our studies together and go back and plunge into the realities of daily life, the pressures, the tasks, the opportunities, the relaxations, the entertainments, the budgeting of our time, the directing of our attention, what are we to do with Revelation? We won't be here. I have no worries about taking the mark, being martyred, watching the unfolding of these awful consequences.

So if the Lord Jesus says, I am blessed if I read these, which this book is the only one out of 66 that confers a specific blessing. Blessed is he who reads, he who understands, he who keeps the words of this book. My goal, our goal, your goal is to keep the words of this book.

We're looking at these words of seals, trumpets, bowls, and the interregnum, the intervals, where we see other things taking place. John sees the, what I would call the menorah angels with the Lord Jesus at the center, with the sickle doing the grain harvest, the preceding opportunities to

repent and the inevitable judgment by the sickle angel that follows. All of these are written for our instruction.

So what kind of instruction should we draw from it? Here we are in Hebrews chapter three. Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, Christ Jesus. That's what the revelation is.

This entire thing is the Lord Jesus writ large. What so many do not want to adjust to, do not want to accept, is that judgment is just as much a part of Jesus Christ as grace, mercy, peace, and love. You do not get the lamb without the lion.

You do not get the suffering servant without the conquering king. And he's a king with kingly authority for a reason. We are blessed and privileged to enter into relationship with God through Christ via the lamb, the suffering servant.

His sacrifice and atoning work on our behalf relates us to the Father, and we become accustomed to mercy. We can come boldly to the throne of grace and request grace to help in time of need. When the Lord disciplines us, chastises us, it is for our good and his glory, but our chastisement nowhere approaches the severity, the calamity, the drastic characteristics of these judgments that we are seeing.

They are revealed to us by these words of revelation. I want to learn from them by reading about them. I do not want to learn from them by experiencing them.

So we want to not just understand the details, figure out how these might be fulfilled, the metaphors and the patterns in reality via technology, via things that we know are up in space and so on. All of that is interesting. It is fun to think about.

I love to do it, but our priority, our goal is to make personal application of what we are seeing. So how do we do that? Well, first of all, let's look at people who failed to heed the warnings delivered by God's judgment on unbelievers. This would be our situation, wouldn't it? We're reading about judgments on unbelievers.

If we don't look at them and figure something out, be warned, be motivated, we're gonna end up like other people who saw God's calamity judgments fall on unbelievers and yet turned away and forgot all about it in their own personal application. That's what Hebrews three is all about. The Lord Jesus was faithful, Moses was faithful.

Therefore, verse seven, as the Holy Spirit says, he that has an ear, let him hear what? What the Holy Spirit says to the churches. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested me, tried me and saw my works 40 years. And because they hardened their hearts and they tested God after seeing his works, therefore, God says in verse 10, I was angry

with that generation and said, they always go astray in their heart and they have not known my ways.

So I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest. You find some of this in Psalm 95, verses seven through 11. It's a virtual quote there.

So verse 12, this is our instruction. This is what we wanna keep in mind. You could put this on a little card and stick it as a placeholder in wherever we are in Revelation.

Beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, but exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, for we have become partakers of Christ, inheritors, those who have a future, not just a dwelling place, but furniture. Opportunities, privileges, access, hidden man of Bible classes, proximity to the Lord Jesus and to God the Father in the kingdoms that are to come. Opportunities for service, for involvement, for accomplishment in the future plans and purposes of God.

We show ourselves worthy and faithful now. He will employ us in unimaginably great things. In the future, it's required of a steward that a man be found faithful.

If you find a faithful steward, it's like finding a good mechanic. You're gonna go back to them time and again. Anyone that is extremely good at what they do, a good dentist, a good doctor, a good surgeon, anyone that gets results and does 110%.

That's what God is looking for from us. This is our training ground. What is our resume gonna look like when we leave this life? Are we going to be those whom God wants to have near him and to grace with opportunities? We make up that content that he is analyzing right now.

So we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence and steadfast to the end. We can't be deflected, we can't be distracted. I would say in this day with devices and social media and streaming and everybody in the thinker pose except their chin is not on their hand, they are staring at their phone.

Distraction is the number one enemy of believers right now. We invite it. We stare at rectangular screens and ask to be taken somewhere other than our innermost thoughts.

Nothing wrong with the internet if it does not displace our personal relationship with God, contemplation, reflection, meditation, remembering, rehearsing, and looking for ways to apply what we have learned in the past, what we have recently seen in the word of God. We have to consciously carve out space now to do that because the default is for the day to be evil. We must be redeeming the time because the days are evil.

You can't just float and expect to be carried on flowery beds of ease to spiritual growth and opportunity. It is a decision. It is a matter of implementing priorities.

And that means every once in a while, get away from the devices, get where you can look out a window at something God created, invest in prayer, without even cracking a book or a notebook, dig back in the repository of the soul, the treasury that the Holy Spirit guards in our souls. What can we pull out? What was the subject the last time I heard a great sermon on the radio? The last time I read a wonderful passage in a devotional book? The last time I was at a Bible class? What's the last thing that really struck me and made a difference? Just silence everything and review, pray over it. Lord, I'm having trouble remembering what I just learned.

Please, may your spirit bring it back to my mind and my heart and show me its pertinence and its application in my current circumstance. I know your word is that which lights my path. May it do so.

May it be the washing of water that cleanses and purifies my thoughts, my motives, so that I can redeem this time and offer myself as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in your sight. That's my reasonable service. If you've got to stop the presses, you've got to leave the room, you've got to shut off the noise to do this.

You can't do it while you're staring at your phone. By the way, you can't do it while you're in Bible class. This is intake.

This is not application. Application comes after. And many people in our tradition of intensive Bible study forgot to turn the corner into, why did I learn that? The process of learning is enjoyable.

And we think, well, that's my spiritual life. Look at all the things I learned. That is not our spiritual life.

It's the application phase. This is what these people fail to do. Verse 16, Hebrews 3. Get John 3, 16, good salvation verse.

Hebrews 3, 16, good gut check verse for a believer. For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt led by Moses? With whom was he angry 40 years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who did not obey? The same people that God delivered after nine plagues plus the death of the firstborn, plus Passover, delivering them from Egypt with a mighty hand, he couldn't bring them to the purpose for which he delivered them because they were disobedient. I don't know how a Calvinist gets around this.

I don't know how reformed theology can't see that it was God's will and desire and promise to take these people to the land of promise and their will prevented the accomplishment of God's will because God created free will and he respects its function and he deals with its choices. You and I are exercising free will every day. God's not going to do it for us.

The Holy Spirit is not going to grab the puppet strings and pull us along. You don't say, oh Lord, empty me and fill me with yourself. Use me as you see fit.

You don't abdicate responsibility to think, to prioritize and to accomplish. That's on us. That's why there is reward and inheritance involved because what kind of choices do we make? There is also discipline and judgment involved.

Discipline and judgment that we see happening to others is like watching capital punishment take place. Even if you're not disposed to be a criminal, there are many things you think about and appreciate when you see the consequences of bad behavior. So verse 19, we see that they could not enter because of, it says unbelief in your new King James.

If you like getting the best possible translation, line through that and put faithlessness. Faithlessness. That's what the Greek word literally means.

Pisteia is faith. You put the alpha privative in front of it. It is because of no faith, literally.

They dropped in the wilderness because of no faith. And notice the correlation between no faith and disobedience. Who was disobedient for 40 years? Therefore, chapter four, since a promise remains of entering into his rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

Notice how Paul, who I believe wrote this, turns from look at the judgments on the Hebrews, what should we then do? He's one pattern step forward from the Hebrews should have looked at what happened to Egypt and learned their lesson. This is what happens to the people who don't listen to God, who don't believe what he has to say, who don't obey when he says, let my people go. Look at the divine consequences.

It was supernatural. These people saw the hail. They heard the frogs.

They smelt all of the bad consequences from Goshen that were happening in the land of Egypt. And if God's supernatural actions don't convince someone, I ought to be paying attention and be careful and be diligent to show myself approved unto God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed. I have seen what happens to those who disregard him and treat his words lightly and refuse to comply.

It is sobering to the point of scary that we can see how great God is, see his power manifest as human beings and fail to respond. This is the power of the human heart exercising its free will. And we are products of our choices.

We make our choices and God deals with us accordingly. So what is the point? We're back over here in Revelation. On your way, you might flip back to Romans chapter one.

You can almost recite this. I have quoted it and read it so many times, but notice verse 16. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.

It is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. What did that menorah angel pronounce, proclaim? Just a chapter ago, the everlasting gospel to every people, tongue, tribe, and nation. The gospel was proclaimed.

This is opportunity. This is potential. This is something to aim your faith at so that God can bless, God can save, God can equip, God can provide, God can promote, God can accompany and enter into a relationship of love and joy and peace.

So that is quoted here. I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It's the power of God with a view toward salvation to anyone and everyone who believes.

Jew first, but also the Gentile. For in it, the gospel of Christ, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the just shall live by faith.

You get that out of Habakkuk chapter two. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven. What are we seeing in the trumpets and the bowls in particular? Not so much in the seals.

We'll talk about that in a minute. But these last 14 judgments, we've seen 13 of them so far. This is the wrath of God revealed from heaven.

What is the result? The wrath of God is revealed from heaven, from the throne, from the altar, from the temple on high against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who do what? Suppress the truth in unrighteousness. The truth is God created, the heavens and the earth and all that in them is. And those who deny that are suppressing the truth in unrighteousness.

What may be known of God is manifest in them for God has shown it to them. It's not just manifest to them. It's to those who are looking on, but it is manifest in creation.

Since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse. Because although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools.

There is nobody that is more a professor of wisdom, professing to be wise than those who cite science, who practice science, who engage in science and think they've got it figured out. That is the primary distraction away from biblical faith today is science, specifically evolutionary theory, not just in the origin of species and the ongoing proliferation of life, but they want everything to have evolved. That works so well for biological life, let's apply it to everything.

Languages, technology, material, physics, everything. So they change or exchange the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man. Do you see that corruptible and incorruptible? And we saw that revelation to which we can now turn.

You can finish reading Romans chapter one and into Romans chapter two, the consequences for

those who see what others do and fail to take a lesson and have to learn the hard way themselves. Those who by patient continuance and well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, God grants eternal life. But to those who continue to be disobedient, recalcitrant, disinterested, apathetic, distracted, deflected, busy somewhere else, there's tribulation, wrath and anguish on every soul that practices evil, the Jew first and also the Gentile.

There is no partiality with God. Israel failed to learn watching Egypt. The believers in the Hebrews generation failed to learn looking at Israel.

Look at what happened to them in the wilderness. Don't let there be an evil heart of unbelief in you. Look at them and learn.

We are now looking at the judgments in Revelation and if you don't get anything else out of the Revelation study, forget who's the Antichrist, where is Babylon, what does a flying thing with a sting in its tail look like, is that a guided missile? The one thing we have to take from Revelation is how should I then live? Does it motivate me at all? And it isn't about avoiding the trappings of empire or not getting too political or getting too political or what do you do in society? And it is our daily life of faith in all of its facets. If you limit yourself to one expression, it's like people that measure their spirituality by whether or not they attend church. Church attendance isn't the be all of our spiritual life, it can be an expression and a healthy one, but if that's what we're relying on, well, you know, I showed up, that won't cut it.

A perfect attendance record at school doesn't mean that you don't get a terrible report card and flunk. Well, I never missed a day. Yeah, but you didn't learn anything while you were there.

So we have seen this all the way up through the trumpets and the bowls. Let me just give you a few suggestions. As we look at these, the judgments are in areas that we can sort of translate using this pattern idea.

So in the largest sense, you think about the seals and God's wrath is not mentioned in the seals. And you remember, this is mostly man's humanity to man. There's a human leader who goes forth conquering and to conquer.

There ends up being famine and pestilence and these other things that mankind seems to do to itself, right? This is sort of self-induced misery on humanity's part. And the Lord Jesus, by opening those seals, takes away the suppressing power of the Holy Spirit so that the consequences of what man does, there is a legitimate application. People say revelation is nothing but self-induced consequences.

No, but I would say you've got a point when it comes to the seals. When that which restrains is taken out of the way and the man of sin is revealed, man is going to do all kinds of unkind and unholy things to his fellow man. And you remember, you review what happens in the seal judgments every time.

And if you just think about the breaking of a seal, a seal keeps something shut, keeps it from happening, keeps it from being read and acted on, right? So it's no accident. Jesus doesn't walk down a row of bells and tap each one. When he rang the third bell or when he tossed the third spear or when he slung the third rock, he could have been there like David, slinging rocks with a sling.

Why breaking seals? Because something that has been sealed up since the foundation of the world and God has been actively preventing the full expression of man's fallen nature from the beginning. From the time Adam and Eve walked out of the garden, God goes to Cain and says, look, if you do well, you'll be accepted. If not, sin is crouching at the door.

When sin started getting too far afield, God sent the flood. No, but God has been actively limiting, hemming in, preventing the complete metastasization of human evil throughout the centuries of human history. That is going to end when we leave.

That which restrains will be taken out of the way and the seals are the manifestation. This is the ugliness that man is gonna perpetrate as never seen before. There've always been wars, rumors of wars, pestilences, greed, avarice, crime, selfish indifference to the plight of others.

As the old vaudevillians used to say, you ain't seen nothing yet. That's the seals. With the trumpets, the Lord Jesus is removing restrictions.

Every time he cracks a seal, bad things are happening because that stuff is unsealed. The lid is taken off the basket that's got the lead lid that we see in Zachariah. Take that lid off, Pandora's box, Medusa's head, whatever you wanna compare it to, it's unrestrained evil perpetrated by man.

When you come to the trumpets, these are angels sounding and angels acting. And there are river angels and wind angels and angels are now accomplishing God's will and evil angels are allowed to do their thing. They are released.

It's not just man's evil. Angelic evil is released and stuff comes out of the bottomless pit and so on, right? So it accelerates. So what would you say? If we stand back and look at this as a big picture, what is the threat to a believer? It is the evil of mankind that is practiced by mankind.

That is something we have to both cultivate God's presence and protective power, give us wisdom that we don't get deceived and fall into a trap and a snare, preserve us, read Psalm 91, abide in the shadow of the Almighty and be preserved from the snare of the fowler and the perilous pestilence. That's what happens around us in the environment. We can thank God that He preserves us from those things.

We can ask Him for wisdom to ensure that we don't fall victim to those things and that our fellow believers are awake and aware and are not taken in. Let no one deceive you. So when you think

about the seals, regardless of the specifics of each one, which are fun to look at, but what is the takeaway? I need to be on my guard against my own nature and the fallen nature of my fellow man, because unrestrained there is chum in the water and the sharks will come.

That's the seals. But that was partial. There's only so much that man can do.

If God be for us, who can be against us? Greater is He that is in you than he that might be in the world. Why should I fear what man can do unto me? We should be careful and cautious. Don't be fooled.

But those judgments were partial, remember? And they were indirect. Bad things happen because people are doing bad actions. When you come to the trumpets, that was Revelation 6-8, the seals.

In Revelation 8-11, we had the trumpets. These are now targeted. This is what happens to the earth.

This is what happens to the sea. This is what happens to the sky. This is what happens to living things.

This is the fields and so on. And those who are affected by those and dependent upon them. So now you have environmental things, and these are warning judgments.

And these are opportunities to not only get disgusted by human behavior, but realize that forces beyond our control, beyond human control or intervention are at work. And they are escalating. They are increasing in intensity.

So this calls for repentance. I think many of the Egyptians might have been fooled by the Egyptian magicians and thought, well, this isn't the real deal. By the time you get to the middle judgments of the 10, a lot of the Egyptians are saying, wait a minute.

This is beyond anything. Then you come to the bowls that we're looking at, and we're up to bowl number six. These are total judgments.

They are directly targeted, and they are final, and there is no coming back. You could recover if you wake up and respond during the seals or the trumpets. Remember, the temple is shut by the glory of God for these bowl judgments.

If you haven't repented in phase one of the seals and phase two of the trumpets, and again, these overlap. I'm talking just as much about levels of thought as I am sequence. But when we look around and we're depressed by what people do, we look and we see that there are also spiritual forces that seem to be dark, foreboding, and opposing us.

There's some darkness that seems to be beyond what humans are doing. The principalities and

powers and rulers of the darkness of this age, and believe me, if you start making progress as a believer, you can kind of smile and get excited because you're gonna draw some spiritual fire from spiritual forces. This is a good thing.

We want this. We are now worthy, worthy to be opposed. Don't be scared.

Don't decide I would rather run away. No, we want to make enough progress that Satan thinks we're an obstacle and a problem and wants to send somebody against us because we are invulnerable. We are untouchable except as God permits a bit of testing.

Demons, dark forces are practice dummies for us. Use it, take advantage of it. They have no more power than a practice dummy.

Practice, use our skills, get good. You benefit from opposition. This is why you have training matches with your fellow students when you're doing hand-to-hand and other forms of self-defense and whatnot.

There is no substitute. They can show you how to stick your foot behind someone's shin and give a twist and a shove and get them down on the ground and put them into a lock and so on. They can show you that a hundred times, but until you are standing there with a human body and do it yourself and have it done to you and feel the leverage and feel the catch points and practice it, you'll never pull it off.

Watching videos is nothing. You have got to do it, get a partner and practice on each other and say, oh, I see, it isn't just getting my foot behind. I've got to get it right here and I've got to be sure that their foot leaves the ground as it rocks over my calf muscle or it isn't gonna work.

I've got to be sure they're off balance, not relying on their other leg or I'm wasting my time. It's a matter of practice. You gain understanding by experience.

This is why God lets us wrestle against principalities and powers and rulers of the darkness of this age. If it was bad for us, God would say, no worries. You're invulnerable, untouchable.

I've got you in a safe room. God lets them in so we can practice. So that's what the trumpet judgments represent.

Look at the domains of the trumpet judgments, the areas of fear. Will my provision last? Will I be a victim of vast forces beyond my control? Is international politics gonna get me? Are terrorists gonna blow me up or kill my loved ones or whatever? This goes beyond mere human evil and oh, I got cheated, I got scammed. This is larger stuff.

This is connected to the way the world works and we get good at coping with that. Then you come to the bowls. The bowls are never coming our way.

God has not destined us for wrath, but for deliverance. So we don't say, I wonder if I can survive a bowl judgment. We learn from the seals on the trumpets and watch some succeed and some fail.

The bowl judgments, this is what those souls under the altar are crying out for. These people are incorrigible, they're unrepentant and believe me, there are such people. You are hearing about them on the news as we speak.

These people are incorrigible, dedicated. I will die and make everybody around me die for my alleged true faith and Allah will welcome me. So any negotiation is a lie and a faint and a gambit.

It plays for time. These people have no intention of reaching peaceful agreement. They will not rest until they dominate and control the world and kill literally anyone who gets in their way.

The best way to produce mass killing is to get the biggest weapon you can build and they will not stop or rest until they get it. And the only way to avoid being victims of that is to judge them first, make it impossible for them to proceed. They may still believe their beliefs, but if they can't organize, if they can't finance, if they can't collect materials and build stuff, their dreams will remain as fragmented as they are.

But if you let them coalesce, if you let them cooperate, if you give them space, they will smile in your face, they will build a weapon and they will stab you in the gut as many times as they can. They are incorrigible. These are the types of people, I'm not talking politics so much, I'm using this as an example of why the bold judgments.

What is our view of the bold judgments? Lord in heaven, bring those angels on. These people have got to go. These fallen angels with this same attitude have got to go, go everlastingly, go permanently, go without mercy.

They've already rejected mercy. Time for mercy is gone. There are incorrigible people, do not waste your time throwing pearls in front of swine who will only turn and tear you to pieces because they are inveterate, by choice, dedicated, unrepentant swine.

And there are things that are fit only for burning and that's what this is. So we can understand what the seals teach us, what the bulls teach us in terms of opposition and evil in the human world, opposition and evil in the spiritual world and the bold judgments. Remember there is celebration in heaven when the bulls are about to be poured out because it is so necessary.

It is such a release and relief and deliverance for those who love the righteousness of God, who love the gentle Jesus. We have to eliminate those who do nothing but try to kill the gentle Jesus and anyone affiliated with him. So beyond the very interesting hope of figuring out where will these things take place and how literal is Armageddon and so on, this is what we have to take away.

We have got to live our life tomorrow and say, what about those seal judgments? What about those trumpets and angels, dark forces, spiritual opposition in heavenly places? What's my response? What's in my toolbox? Where's my spiritual armor? What should I be doing? Can I spot it? Can I relax and employ the wisdom God gives me? This is our challenge. Well, that said, let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're gonna get back into the text and move forward as far as we can.